

ST ANDREW'S ST BARTHOLOMEW'S

Vicar's Blog

On the first Sunday of the month, for most of this year, we are dipping into our 'Healthy Habits' series. The idea is to encourage all of us to keep thinking about 'Healthy habits that keep God at the centre of everything'. Church tradition, especially since early monastic times, called it a 'Rule of life'. When you think of 'rule', think more like 'trellis' – things that support the work of the Spirit in your life and help you to grow more like Jesus, deeper into discipleship. This year, we're thinking of three 'streams' under the 'Healthy habit' series which are:

- Prayer, Scripture and Worship
- Rest and Relationships
- Generosity and Witness

A survey from the US found that "the main reason that young people drop out of church or fall away from faith is insufficient discipleship" (quoted in *Faith for Exiles, Kinsman and Mattlock, 2019, p28*). The crisis in the Church today is nothing less than the lack of maturing of her members. We need to consider, with the utmost thought and intentionality, how we can have robust 'healthy habits' that help us to mature as disciples. Last month, we touched briefly on the notion that we all have free will to make choices that lead to actions, leading to habits and, over years, a shaped character. The question is, are we going to make daily choices with the ultimate aim of being formed more into Christ's character?

This Sunday we're looking at Prayer, and the beautiful passage from Luke 11. Jesus' working assumption is that every one of his followers prays. He says to them 'When you pray'. After laying down a beautiful pattern of prayer with the 'Lord's prayer', he gives a stunning parable, demonstrating how we just need to ask the Holy Spirit, because, more than any loving earthly parent, God is longing for us to 'ask', 'seek' and 'knock' to him. I wonder if it's tempting to think that God is like the sleepy friend shouting from the window at us, saying 'Don't bother me' (v7) ... 'don't bother cultivating a rich and regular prayer life with God. What's the point - he's not bothered with you....' Let's believe the truth that God longs for us to talk to him, to be with him, to cultivate rich and joy-filled patterns of both spontaneous and planned prayer into each day. He's with you now and he's 'all ears'. Let's pull up a chair and have a catch-up...

Sunday 4th Feb

Healthy Habits - Prayer

9am Communion service at St A's

10.30am All age worship with Communion at St A's

6pm Encounter – Evening of worship & prayer at St A's

Sunday 11th Feb

Church of Tomorrow – Eph 1

9am Communion service at St A's

10.30am Informal Worship with Children's and Youth Groups

Note the 3:30pm Evensong at St B's has been cancelled.

Monday 5th Feb

7pm STA Youth

Wednesday 7th Feb

11:30am BLT (Babies, Lunch and Toddlers)

Thursday 8th Feb

10am Thursday Knitters

10am Holy Communion at St A's

7:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

7:15pm Alpha

Friday 9th Feb

9:30am Friday Minis

12noon CAMEO

5:45pm Youth Social – Ninja Warrior

Please visit www.stastb.church/calendar for the most up to date information.

Churchsuite

ChurchSuite serves as our secure platform for staying connected and accessing the latest information about events at St. Andrew's, including our weekly newsletter. You can conveniently sign up for special events, activities, and teams through the website or app, available for download at <https://churchsuite.com/apps/>.

Churchsuite Helpdesk

For any assistance with ChurchSuite, Adam will be hosting a helpdesk every 2 months at the end of the 10:30am and 9am services in the large hall. The next session is scheduled for this Sunday, 4th Feb. Join us and ensure you're making the most of your ChurchSuite experience. See you there!

Notices

Open the Book: The Open the Book Team visits Churchdown Village Junior School every Wednesday morning during term-time. We have the opportunity to tell children about our amazing God through acting out stories from the Bible and getting the students involved as well. We're looking for more volunteers to join our team, whether this is every week or more occasionally. If you'd like to get involved or find out more about Open the Book, Kate would love to chat to you. You can email her at children@stastb.church

Cheltenham Prayer for Schools: We welcome you to join us online from the comfort of your own home for our Spring Term Meeting, Monday 5th February. Login from 7.50pm for an 8pm start - the theme for our meeting will be "Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care in Schools". (For more information, please speak to Rachael Champness). Meeting ID: 840 4560 0953; Passcode: 414369

Prayers of love and faith conversation: Sunday 25th Feb 6-7.15pm. The Church of England have introduced prayers for same-sex couples. Please come and hear the leadership's response moving forwards.

Envisioning Evening: Our annual envisioning evening is taking place on Sunday 17th March at 6pm. Do join us as we hear from all the different ministries the church is involved in!

Ash Wednesday Service As we shortly begin this season of lent, we would love to invite you to the Ash Wednesday on the 14th Feb (7pm) at St Andrew's.

CAP Job – Gloucester: Gloucester Vineyard Church are organising the recruitment for a new CAP (Christians Against Poverty) Debt Centre Manager. For more information visit <https://www.vineyardchurches.org.uk/vacancies/cap-debt-centre-manager/>

Pastoral Care

As part of our Christian community, we provide mutual support for one another. Much of this happens informally with friends within the church and through the connect groups. However, sometimes people will have need for more personal support and encouragement either as a 'one-off chat' or on a more ongoing basis. We have a pastoral care team who can provide this type of care. Please contact Nigel Roe (Team Leader) on 07780 994827 or Rosi White on 07426 357967.

Eco Tip

WASTE: Are you gearing up for that Spring Clean? Try using eco-cleaning products like those sold at Churchdown Zero - at church, every second Sunday of the month.

Events

Our website calendar is a good place to find out what's happening throughout the year. Visit <https://www.stastb.church/calendar>

9th Feb – Youth Social – Ninja Warrior

14th Feb – Ash Wednesday Service 7.30pm

25th Feb – Prayers of Love and faith (PLF) presentation 6pm

17th March – Envisioning Evening 6pm

24th March – Newcomers' Tea 12noon

St Andrew's Church Centre, Station Road, Churchdown, Gloucester
GL3 2JT

www.stastb.church 01452 712154

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Closed Tuesday 9.30am - 11.30am

Contact information

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Forward any notices to Adam.



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